

Square D

CASE
SUMMARY

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SQUARE D

Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Linn County

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The Company

Square D, part of Schneider Electric, is the North American division of a global electrical industry leader that boasted approximately \$8.8 million in sales in 2001. It is the market-leading supplier of electrical distribution, industrial control, and automation products systems services. Its products are found in all types of industrial, commercial, and residential facilities.

Project Background

Square D is ISO 9000 certified (quality standard) and is in the process of becoming ISO 14001 certified (environmental standard). It has active recycling programs for corrugated cardboard, packing materials, scrap metals, used oils and solvents as well as other materials.

Incentives to Change

Square D is now owned by Schneider Electric based in Paris, France. In order to be more competitive in the European market, it has become a corporate-wide policy that all facilities must become ISO 14001 certified. The automotive industry here in the U.S. has required that all of its suppliers, including Square D, also become certified.

Results

This standard requires an organization to have an implemented Environmental Management System (EMS). While Square D has a well established EMS, it required further organization and documentation to be compliant with the international standard. There are now documented procedures for each of the '7 clauses in the standard, which are in the process of management approval. The company has scheduled internal auditor training and in the process of creating a greater employee awareness of the importance of certification. Square D is on schedule for official ISO 14001 registration in March 2003.



Stretch wrap is a low density polyethylene film that is used to wrap pallets to make sure that the contents are more stable for transportation and storage. Previously, the used material was thrown in the garbage to be compacted and landfilled. However, there is a recycling market for this material because it can be reused to make new plastics. Square D has brought a baler back into the facility and purchased new wheeled containers to collect and bale the stretch wrap. The plant creates about 30 tons of stretch wrap a year so recycling the material will create a cost saving of \$2,750 annually.

Square D had an office paper recycling program at the facility but it was not very effective. Only 30% of the total paper waste was being recycled and Square D was getting no money for the paper. Taking into consideration hauling costs and landfill tipping fees, the company was actually

paying \$1,911 a year to throw away paper! With the purchase of almost 70 new containers and implementing a new system, Square D has switched to a vendor who will provide a revenue for the paper. With a potential to recycle at least 37 more tons of paper a year, there is a cost savings of \$4,023 per year.



The used corrugated cardboard at the facility is currently put in a compactor and picked up for recycling. Square D currently recycles 144 tons of cardboard per year and an increased volume is expected. A different recycling vendor has offered the use of a free baler and will charge no transportation costs if Square D will return to baling the cardboard it produces. Although more labor intensive if baled, it is the preferred mode of preparing cardboard

waste. It is a simpler method for transportation and there is a higher market price for baled cardboard. If Square D were to change vendors and begin baling cardboard again, there is an estimated cost savings of \$8,149 annually.

Other minor projects completed this summer will not have great cost savings but have relocated waste that would have otherwise gone to the landfill. The results from the recycling programs implemented include annual savings of \$14,922 and a 46% reduction in the amount of solid waste that Square D sends to the landfill each year.